

Coalbrookdale, Denniston Plateau

Carolyn Davies

We all set off down the low-grade Coalbrookdale early in the day. We found a *Powelliphanta* shell, and used the hardness of its shell to argue over the snail's age. Paul found an excellent example of pink pine (*Halocarpus biformis*) showing how the plant's juvenile form changes as it matures. Team Leader Melissa photographed the invasive exotic species *Juncus squarrosus*, orange day lily (*Hemerocallis fulva*) and *Escallonia rubra* to pop onto the Denniston Project on Nature Watch

(<http://naturewatch.org.nz/observations/project/denniston-plateau-west-coast>).

The track led us to the mouths of the mines, with the colours of the mosses and lichens demonstrating the interesting effects that the discharge of nutrients and chemicals can have on the immediate plants. During our lunch break, a moss moth (*Scoparia diphteralis*) took a liking to my backpack.

The groups split up after lunch and the younger ones elected to climb Mt Williams and went up Myra's Track (4 hours return) through a beech forest. We saw brown creepers and a rifleman in the forest on the return journey. The summit had a tarn, and a great view of the Paparoa Ranges, as well as the plateau. There were a few stocky kanuka, and a multitude of alpine plants that I could not possibly list.

A side note about the other groups' afternoon excursion, Paul and Trevor investigated the small patches of plateau on the side of the road, which turned out to be thriving biodiversity hubs. Paul found a form of the threatened eyebright *Euphrasia wettsteiniana* (Fig. 2) that is restricted to Stockton and Denniston, Westport lowlands and the northern end of the Paparoa Range.

Paul Maurice adds that among some other interesting plants found on this day, the best was the tiny *Liparophyllum gunnii* in shallow, peaty depressions. He also enjoyed seeing abundant *Dracophyllum palustre* in flower, along with *D. pronum*, *D. oliveri*, and *D. rosmarinifolium*, *Epacris alpina*, *Forstera mackayi*, and *Hebe mooreae*.

Day 3 Sunday 16 February

Makirikiri Stream

Miles & Gillian Giller

Six members ventured first into the Makirikiri Stream catchment; again this was karst landscape. We were first bemused by streams that disappeared into clefts, only to emerge a short distance downhill. The stream bottom was sculpted into photogenic mill-pools, competing with the botany for our attention. Taking special care to not slip into any clefts ourselves, we followed the stream and toe-slopes, finding a wealth of ferns, mosses and liverworts as seen the previous day. *Anaphalioides trinervis*, with its distinctive three veins, was common on streamside rocks, while the bright red fruit of *Nertera*